

How to Sell Products on eBay

The first thing you will need to do is create a user on eBay. It is extremely important to bid on at least one item in the first 30 days in order to activate your new eBay account.

By bidding on at least one item it will remove the "new user" flag in eBay's computers which will prevent eBay from removing your id if you do not bid on any items.

You don't need to win any auctions just at minimum bid on a .99 cent auction to activate the account will suffice. You can sign up for an eBay account directly at www.ebay.com

TOP 5 tips on how to sell on ebay:
HOW TO SELL ON EBAY

TIP #1 - Choosing the right products to sell

Since most people don't know anything about ecommerce and building websites and such, most folks will start out by selling products on eBay, then pay someone to build a website once the money starts coming in. The big question is: what is the hot product to sell on eBay to make money fast?

While it's true that selling products on eBay can be a quick, low cost way to launch an online business, following the herd by selling the "hot product" of the moment, is not a great idea. To the contrary, chances are you will be stomped in the ground by the herd and left lying in the dust with your unsold inventory in hand.

The most successful eBay sellers are those who understand that success on eBay relies on many of the same factors as success in a brick and mortar business.

- * Smart sellers research the marketplace and the competition to determine the salability and profitability of the product.

- * Smart sellers test the market with one or two before committing to a product line and tying up their cash reserves in inventory that may never sell.

- * Smart sellers adjust their product offerings until they find a product or product line that sells consistently.

The last point is perhaps the most important. Long term eBay success does not come from "one off" sales. The key to real eBay success is to find a product that sells well and sell that product over and over and over again.

There are several websites where you can find excellent products that can ship products directly to your customers once you sell their products. These companies are often called Dropship companies.

Will offer you the best service of all since they will gather products from several manufacturers all in one place PLUS they will offer their dropshipping services to all

theirs members at no extra cost.

There are other websites that offer you the wholesale sources only, which means that you will need to work with the manufacturers directly in order to buy and sell the products on ebay.

TIP #2 - Preparing To Sell

Using online auctions is a relatively inexpensive way to promote your products or services. On the downside, they can be very time-consuming to post to - especially if you're only making a few dollars profit per sale. Several steps are involved before you can post your auction on major sites such as; eBay or Yahoo! Shopping Auctions. If you're new to selling via online auctions, the following steps will make listing your item a smooth and easy process.

- 1). Plan your item title and description. Give some thought to naming and describing your item. What will buyers most want to know about it? What are its most appealing characteristics? What words might buyers use to search for your item?
- 2). Write your HTML code. If you plan to include HTML, complete and test your code before you get started with the listing process. Learn more about HTML.
- 3). Have a good picture of your item in an appropriate digital format. JPEG (.jpg) is recommended. If you host your own photos, have your photos uploaded to your service. In some cases, you'll need your photos stored on your computer's hard drive.
- 4). Have the item on hand. Keep the item close by in case you think of other things you want to add to your description. In addition, you'll want to ship the item to the buyer ASAP.
- 5). Plan your pricing. You may want to do a little research into the selling prices of other items similar to yours. This will help you set your starting price.
- 6). Registration. This usually will require your credit/ debit card and bank account information. It is recommended you write down your registration information (username and password) or save it in a place you will remember in the future.

You're now prepared to sell your item!

A few things to keep in mind after you've made the sell:

1 Communicate With The Buyer. Some auction sites offer a checkout service in which you must verify before receiving payment. Contact the buyer directly if you have not heard from the buyer within three days of your listing's end.

2 Receive Payment eBay and Yahoo! offer their own payment solutions. Another popular method used by auctioneers is PayPal. If the buyer hasn't already made payment, send them a letter explaining how they should proceed.

3 Ship Your Order Immediately You don't want your buyer to get angry. Many auctions provide buyer and seller feedback systems. It's hard to sell products with a bad rating and several negative buyer comments.

TIP #3 - When is the Best Time to List Your Items?

You may think that you should list your items on Saturday mornings because that is when you have the most free time or on Monday nights after 10:00 because the family is in bed and you finally have total concentration. You need to ask yourself just how many possible buyers will be at their computers at closing time. Especially when 10:00 p.m. on the West Coast is 1:00 a.m. on the East Coast. There are lots of possible buyers shopping at lunchtime during the week. But, because of the enormous amount of traffic at that time, you really cut down on the possibility of last-minute bidding if the bids are all in an internet traffic jam and can't get through at all.

The amount of bidders a viable at closing time is of utmost importance to your auction. Most of the bidding on any auction will occur in the first 24 hours (when it is listed as new) and on the last day (when is listed as ending today), with most people only looking at one of these two times. And, the bulk of the serious bidding will be in the last 5 minutes! An auction is truly at its best when two or more people fight over your item, and they may not be awake to do so at 1:00 in the morning.

When to list your items is best decided on actual sales histories of your particular items. Hardware and tools may get more male bidders who are looking on Saturday afternoon, and pokemon cards may get more attention from kids right after school. Etc. So, check the sales of completed items. You should be able to see a definite pattern for each type of item you plan to list. This is the first step.

If your item sells best on a weekday evening, now you need to see if there is also a second pattern. It sold best on Tuesday one week and Thursday the next week. Why? One big factor in evening sales now is "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" There are almost no bidders at their computers when this show is on television. This show happens to be moved around from week to week. On top of that, if it is on at 8:00 p.m., that means 8:00 p.m. on both coasts so West Coast seller has to work around 5:00 p.m. through 8:00 p.m., and the East Coast seller has to work around 8:00 p.m. through 11:00 p.m.

There are many more factors that come into play. Watch the weather forecasts for all parts of the country. If the East Coast is due for heavy rains, more possible bidders will be available at their computers instead of outside enjoying the spring or summer weather - and vice versa. If an area is in the middle of a terrible heat wave, they may be hiding inside at their computer instead of doing anything outside. Great weather is bad for sales. You may not want to have items close on Thanksgiving afternoon when most of the country is sitting down to a great meal - or in the evening on the day of a Presidential election. Contrary to this logic, Christmas morning may be a good time to have items close because many people don't have family with whom to share their day or they are not of a Christian faith. Those people would see this as a great time to sneak in a few bids. Other people may go shopping on Christmas afternoon to try to buy what they didn't receive for a gift!

Selling at the busiest time of the day will make your photos load slower. At any time, using a dial-up connection puts your auctions at risk since they will take longer to load. And, since most dial-up connections get lost often, there is always the chance that your photos will not load at all. When either happens, you will lose buyers. Some could bookmark your auction to try again later, but last-minute shoppers don't have time to come back. Cable modem or DSL will make everything you do on the internet at least 10 times faster - without disconnects. You only need to be have your photos not load during the last half hour of an auction once to know how important your internet connection is.

The real answer to when to list your items is it is totally relative....relative to as many factors as you can think of. You will need to do research on the past and try to foresee the future. Good luck on the latter.

TIP #4 - How To Get FREE Shipping Supplies

The United States Post Office is still "pushing" their Priority Mail services. You can order all the shipping supplies you want through the USPS - order in minutes on line - and have them delivered to your door. When you make your first order, the USPS will mail you a postcard to sign and mail back to them. The "payment" for this deal is simply agreeing to (and signing to prove it) use these supplies only for their intended purpose. Anyone caught turning Priority Mail boxes inside out to use a cheaper mail service will be in big trouble. We haven't done this so we don't know if you get a large fine, jail time, or just lose the privilege to ever receive any more supplies. So, this is not for you if you prefer to send your packages by UPS or using the Book Rate.

Just what kind of supplies does the USPS offer? Small boxes, larger boxes, flat boxes, larger flat boxes, small flat boxes, flat mailers, "Priority Mail" tape, and labels. You can't have it all, ! you have to buy your own bubblewrap! The only real catch is that you must order the minimum, which can be a case of boxes. Since the boxes come flat, this is not as bad as it sounds.

For those that don't want to use Priority Mail or the USPS in general, there are still places to get boxes for free.

* Your local supermarket gets deliveries at least once a week. Just ask one of their employees on what day and at what time their deliveries arrive. They won't usually save boxes for you, but you can walk in and get as many as you like before they cut them down for recycling.

* Office Depot has great boxes for larger items. They receive their reams of paper in sturdy boxes with lids, and these are always clean. Our local Office Depot receives paper deliveries twice a week. The store manager even agreed to hold the boxes for a few hours. We just need to go in on the correct day. Since these are such handy boxes, you may have to be the first to get to the store to beat others with the same idea.

* Check the free ads in the Recycler. Companies go out of business all the time, and they would usually prefer to give their supply of boxes away than to pay someone to haul them away. We found a vitamin store that was closing down and got hundreds of small and tiny boxes. These are not only great for mailing small items, but they are perfect for double boxing a set of smaller breakables.

* Liquor stores have the sturdiest boxes since bottles of liquor and wine are so heavy. If you sell bottles, these may even come with cardboard slots in them already to keep bottles from hitting each other when you send out several to one buyer.

* Dumpsters behind stores sometimes have good empty boxes. Sometimes you are lucky enough to find the boxes piled outside the dumpster. Either way, you should check them to be sure that they are clean and dry (a box will be weakened forever once it gets wet).

* Get inventive, you may find even more good suppliers of boxes.

TIP #5 - How To Get The Highest PRICE For Your Item

LIST YOUR ITEM CORRECTLY TO GET THE BEST PRICE

Put your item in the correct category. There are shoppers who only shop by checking the category list over and over, limiting the number of possible buyers if your collectible salt and pepper set is listed under porcelain dinnerware. Some people think that the most general category possible will get their item the most views, but this is not true on ebay. If you are listing sixteen items, take a few seconds to double check your listing details so you don't put items in the wrong category accidentally.

RESEARCH YOUR ITEM FIRST

Not researching the item you are selling is a common fault. You call the pattern Blue Onion when it is actually Delft. First, the Blue Onion collectors go away unhappy, then the Delft collectors never came at all. Besides knowing what to call your item, you

should research its value. There could be six of the exact same item listed for \$2.99 each but your price is \$12.00. It doesn't take a genius to see that your auction is the last of these auctions to even get a look, let alone a

A GOOD PHOTO BRINGS A HIGHER AUCTION PRICE

Take a good clear picture of your item, as close up as you can to get the entire item into the picture. Before you click the shutter, see if there is anything ugly or unnecessary in the immediate background. You could move the background distraction or put your item in another location to take the picture. Then, your picture must be optimized. With the help of a photo program, crop the picture to include the item only. No cares about your living room, and it is maddening to wait forever for a photo to load only to find out that your time was wasted because the seller couldn't take a minute to crop their picture. Tweak the color of your item until it matches as much as possible. Most collectors specialize, and the color does make a difference to them. If they are forced to guess on the color of your item, they just might pass altogether. Next, shrink your picture down to 72 dpi (which is the most that monitors see anyway) to make your picture load faster. If your starting picture is small, you can shrink the dpi without shrinking the size of the picture that people will see. If your picture fills the entire screen, you can probably make it much smaller so it loads faster and makes for more comfortable viewing. When a special feature should be highlighted, make a copy of your large picture before shrinking it, then crop out a "close-up" view of that feature only as a second photo. Try sharpening your photo - sometimes this helps and sometimes sharpening makes the picture look worse, but you can always click on undo.

When you take pictures without enough light, you have problems. The color will never come out correct, even with good photo software. A white item will look dirty and gray, and lightening the picture doesn't help much. And, shadows can look like flaws to buyers. It always makes for a better photo if you adjust your camera to match the lighting you are using.

ADVERTISE WITH YOUR PICTURE

If you are not using ebay's picture services, you could simply write your photos into your written description. But, unless one of your photos goes in the space "Enter the Web site address of your hosted picture," you won't get the little camera icon letting buyers know that you do have one or more photos. Some buyers will pass your auction right by if they think you don't have any photos.

A cheap (25 cents) way to get a lot of advertising is to put your photo into the gallery. Some people shop through the pictures of the gallery only. And, the gallery picture now also goes on the general listing page. Lots of buyers get a little sidetracked at looking at all the photos that they pass right over some of the auctions without this extra photo.

LACK OF PHOTOS HURT AUCTION SALES

Be honest with your photos. You might put into your written description that the item has a "small" defect in the back. Showing a photo of the perfect side only would be deceptive on your part, and it makes a lot of buyers not trust you. If a buyer's idea of a

small defect is much different than yours, you will end up with a very unhappy customer and possibly have to issue a refund to keep your reputation. You don't have to put a large close-up of the flaw, since this makes the problem look worse than it really is, but do show both sides of the item at the same size if one side has a problem. Buyers may decide that the flaw is not enough to bother them.

NO PHOTO IS AN AUCTION KILLER

Collectors are very picky. They may have twenty items that look the same to a casual viewer (or an under informed seller), but all twenty have some little difference in the collector's eye. If you don't offer any photo at all, they will assume that yours is not Number 21 for their collection. Not researching the item you are selling is a common fault. You call the pattern Blue Onion when it is actually Delft. First, the Blue Onion collectors go away unhappy, and the Delft collectors never came at all - an excellent reason to add a photo. Years ago, people could say "I don't have a digital camera." They did start out pretty expensive. Not any longer. If you plan to sell more than one or two items, you can't afford to not get a digital camera. Even an inexpensive digital camera can produce a good picture if you follow the directions. If you only plan to sell one or two items, you could scan in a photo from a regular camera, have someone else take some ! photos for you, or borrow someone's camera.

INCORRECTLY PRICED AUCTION ITEMS MAY NOT SELL

There are two items exactly the same listed at the same time. Basically, everything about both auctions matches except the opening price. The item is expected to sell for about \$28.00. One starts the auction at \$14.99 (Auction A). The other starts the auction at \$28.00 (Auction B). When both auctions close, Auction B has received NO bids at all. Sure, the item is worth \$28.00, but people don't want to pay what an item is worth. They want a deal at an auction. Auction A received 10 bids and sold for \$28.00 The first few buyers were trying for to get a great deal. Then the competition began, and some went back and put in another bid. Competition simply works with auctions. Even after several bids got the price up and up, people could still see that the starting price was very low - so they will check out your other auctions.

RESERVE AUCTIONS

Reserve auctions can may both sides happy. The seller in Auction B does not have to sell the item for less than \$28.00 if the reserve price is \$28.00 (\$27.99 is even better). But, if that seller makes the opening price \$9.99, the buyers will still think DEAL even after seeing that there is a reserve. This brings competition without the risk. The most common reason for using a reserve is in case ebay has an outage so the buyers can't get in and bid, and it is good insurance in a questionable economy.

THE WRITTEN DESCRIPTION DOES COUNT

Some sellers think that they can say about six words about an item since they put in a photo. No. People with older computers, on a bad ISP, or that just highly value their time do a lot of their shopping without photos. They "turn off" the photos in their browser and search by written descriptions alone. At least put a real description of what the item is. This is also highly valuable when people do searches. A search can't find a 3" Goofy

in a karate outfit if the description only says "No damage, shipping is extra." Added to all of that is the title of "Goofy Toy," and you can see how difficult it would be for this item to be found. Few Goofy collectors want to do a search for "goofy" just to find one special one - there are thousands of Goofy items listed, including Goofy Grape and someone who tells you he got the item from his goofy brother.

Write your description in an effort to answer any question buyers might have. You could get many, many buyers looking during the last five minutes, and that simply not enough time to ask a question and get the answer. Getting a question answered was much quicker before ebay made themselves mediators. In fact, it is to your benefit to put your email address in your description for last-minute questions. Anyone who ever goes anywhere on the internet will have their email address added to "spam" email lists. It is just the price we pay for the privilege of talking to anyone in the world for free (no stamp, no phone bill). Hitting the delete key is not hard to do. If you have kids and worry about the possibility of receiving adult-type email, don't let the kids use email until you check the mail. Anyway, if a buyer doesn't have enough time to get their questions answered, they will most likely not bid. In the event that someone has a question in the last hour or two, or even the last 24 hours (when your item is in the "ending today" category), do your best to be available. Check your email often.

The more people that find your auction through a search, the more bids you could get - theoretically, depending on all other factors also. Include your item name in the description. Adding the color (although it seems obvious by the photo) may double your amount of visitors. People search in different ways, and they don't all spell the same or use the same terms. For example, using "eye glasses," "eyeglasses" and "spectacles" in your description will bring in three times the number of visitors as any one of these alone. Add the maker's name also if you know it.

NOTICES, WARNINGS

If you have had trouble in the past with an auction or two and would like to prevent the same problem in the future, you are allowed to put some sort of notice or warning in your description. But, be aware that bad auction dealings are such a minority, as are bad auction people. Try to make your words sound businesslike and polite instead of threatening or belittling. Otherwise, you may get your wish and not get have any more bad auctions simply because you will send all potential buyers away in fear or disgust. They may not want to take a chance on being your next "victim."

THE AUCTION TITLE

Titles with funny characters (** @ @ ^ ^ " ") in them do not attract more bidders. While searching through a list quickly, these characters actually get in the way and prevent the eye from seeing that one word or phrase you are looking for.

Doesn't it seem obvious that what the item is should be included in the title? There are many, many auction titles that give no clue as to what the item is. "Large China!" That's quite a title. It is for a marble - a valuable type of marble. Someone doing a search for marbles won't find it. The description also does not contain the word marble. (This is an

actual auction listed at this very moment!) The auction is in the marbles section, but only a small percentage of buyers shop through the category. If you ran an auction this way and then accidentally listed it in the wrong category, absolutely no buyers would find it. The word "jerk" suddenly comes to mind! Why would that be? Enough said.

EXASPERATING EXTRAS

Unless you are a real professional, don't use a background on your auction page. Most of the backgrounds used are way too large. In fact, most backgrounds can be found in the pages that take forever to load - then you find out that the item wasn't even worth the wait. That is a quick way to lose customers. Even if you are a professional and can make your background small enough that it loads instantly, why? Why bother? Backgrounds do not add anything worthwhile to an auction, they sometimes get in the way of the picture, and they are annoying. Even worse adjectives could be used for music on an auction page! As mentioned in a section above, photos that take up the entire screen and photos that are absolutely huge but are 90 percent junk and 10 percent item are a waste of bandwidth and time.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Getting good prices for your items starts with common sense. Give your visitors every reason to come back to see your auctions next time and to see your other auctions now, and get rid of everything that is not essential or takes up their valuable time. If there are six other auctions for the same item that you want to sell, look at the one that is getting the most bids and the ones that is getting the least (or no) bids and see what the differences are. If you are new to selling, do a lot of browsing first. See how other auctions look. If you don't have a photo editing program, you absolutely need to find one if you are going to list more than one auction ever - and even then if you want to get a good price for your item.

SIX STEPS TOWARDS SUCCESSFUL BUYING ON ONLINE AUCTIONS

Buying on eBay can be very rewarding, either in terms of being able to pick up items cheaply or for hunting for hard to find items. Although generally the experience is good, there are instances where things can go badly wrong. These tips, based on experience over the last seven years, should help to avoid some of the potential pitfalls.

* Make use of the various tools provided on eBay to ascertain the target price of items you are interested in. A simple way to do this is to 'search' for completed items.

* Always check that there are no hidden costs associated with your potential bargain. These may include unspecified postage costs, or paypal fees chargeable to the buyers. If in doubt e-mail the buyer and if you don't get a response then don't bid. Remember that when buying from overseas postage costs can be significant compared to the price of the item and also for more expensive items you may be liable to customs fees.

* Check out the seller's feedback. You should be aiming to buy from sellers with feedback of at least 98 per cent - if it is less and you are interested in an item read the feedback comments to satisfy yourself that the buyer provides a good service. In particular, read the neutral and negative feedback posts to try to work out what may have gone wrong with previous transactions.

* Don't get carried away and end up bidding more than need or want to. Some items appear very frequently on eBay and it may be worth setting yourself a limit and waiting for the next one to come along.

* If you find you are often being outbid at the last moment, consider using a sniping software which you can use to automatically submit a bid in the last few seconds of the auctions.

* Where possible, use Paypal to pay for items on eBay. The sellers get their payment quickly, and there is a degree of protection for buyers if things go wrong. eBay (via My eBay) provides a number of tools for monitoring progress on your transaction.